

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8409

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 5792

E. O. 112: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN, US

SUBJECT: BRICKBATS AT THE US

SUMMARY: IN THE LAST THREE DAYS, INDIAN MEDIA CARRIED EXTENSIVE COMMENT AND COVERAGE OF INDO-US RELATIONS. LEADING MEWS PAPERS (TWENTY OF THEM), WASHINGTON-BASED INDIAN CORRESPONDENTS, AND THE STATE-RUN ALL INDIA RADIO CARRIED A CASCADE OF COMMENT, IN TONE STRONGLY CRITICAL OF US POLICIES. HOWEVER, SOME WRITERS URGED A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF EACH OTHER'S VIEWPOINT. END SUMMARY.

1. THE ANNOYANCE OF COMMENTATORS WAS LARGELY CONCENTRATED ON THE US FOREIGN POLICY ACTION. A MAJOR POINT REPEATEDLY STRESSED WAS THE US DECISION TO LIFT THE ARMS EMBARGO TO PAKISTAN. THIS DECISION, THEY SAY, HAS HINDERED THE NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIAN AND PAKISTAN. THE ARMS MAKE PINDI BELLICOSE AND BELLIGERENT. THE DECISION ALSO CONTRADICTS THE ASSURANCES GIVEN BY DR.

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KISSINGER DURING HIS INDIA VISIT LAST YEAR. BECAUSE OF THE

US DECISION, THE IMLA ACCORD HAS SUFFERED A SETBACK. THE ENTIRE BLAME RESTS ON WASHINGTON BECAUSE IT CONTINUES TO FOLLOW THE OLD POLICY IN THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT. IT HAS NOT LEARNED ANYTHING FROM THE PAST HISTORY. PAKISTAN ATTACKED INDIAN THREE TIMES WITH AMERICAN ARMS AND WAS BEATEN THREE TIMES.

295 ANALYSTS NOLAD THAT INDIAN WAS NOT ALONE IN OPPOSING AMERICAN INTERVENTION IN INDO-CHINA, SUPPLYING WAR MATERIAL TO ISRAEL, AND SETTING UP A MILITARY BASE IN DIEGO GARCIA. INDIA'S CRITICISM IS VOICED AS A FREE AND INDEPENDENT NATION; IT IS NOT A SATELLITE OF THE US. AFTER ALL, DIFFERENCE OF OPINION AND CRITICISM ARE PART OF RELATIONS BETWEEN NATIONS. THE CRITICISM IS OF THE FOREIGN POLICY, NOT OF AMERICAN PEOPLE AND THEIR CIVILIZATION, THEY ADDED.

3. A NUMBER OF OBSERVERS COMMENTED ON THE TRIUMPH OF NATIONALISM IN ASIA AND THE AMERICAN INCAPACITY TO UNDERSTAND THE ASIAN (INCLUDING INDIAN) MIND. THEY ALLEGED THAT AMERICANS TEND TO OVERSIMPLIFY THE INDIAN ATTITUDE AND JUMP TO CERTAIN STEREOTYPED CONCLUSIONS. AMERICANS DO NOT BELIEVE IN QUIET DIPLOMACY. THEY DO NOT USE SUBTLE EXPRESSIONS. THEY HAVE NOT MASTERED THE ART OF MAINTAINING A CREDIBLE DISTINCTION BETWEEN SHADOW PLAY AND REAL LIFE TO GET DOWN TO THE HEART OF A PROBLEM.

4. COMMENTATORS URGE WASHINGTON TO RECONSIDER ITS DECISION TO SUPPLY WAR MATERIAL TO PAKISTAN. EXCEPT FOR THIS POINT, THEY DO NOT SPELL OUT TANGIBLE PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE INDO-US RELATIONS. THEY INCLINE TO GENERALITIES, PLEADING THAT WASHINGTON SHOULD VIEW INDO-US RELATIONS IN THEIR HISTORICAL AND PRESENT-DAY CONTEXT WITH A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE VARIOUS FACTORS INVOLVED IN THEM.

5. SOME WRITERS NOTED THAT BOTH NATIONS MUST LEARN TO TAKE AN UNSENTIMENTAL, DISPASSIONATE VIEW OF EACH OTHER'S POLICIES AND ACTION. THEY EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THERE IS NO REASON WHY INDIA AND THE US SHOULD DRIFT APART AND ALLOW PESSIMISM TO BREED.

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6. INDIAN REACTION TO THE SURRENDER OF THE GVN IS ANOTHER MATTER WHICH WE ARE SUMMARIZING SEPARATELY, BUT IN WHICH A CONSIDERABLE DEGREE OF "WE TOLD YOU SO" IS VISIBLE FROM ALL QUARTERS.

7. COMMENT. NEEDLESS TO SAY, ALL OF THIS IS NOT CONDUCTIVE TO A REVIVAL OF A CORDIAL POLITICAL DIALOGUE HERE, ALTHOUGH INDIVIDUALS CONTINUE TO BE FRIENDLY AND RELAXED IN CON-

VERSATION. POLCOUNSELOR HAD LONG DISCUSSION WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY'S PRESS SPOKESMAN (HAKSAR) APRIL 30 ON THIS WHOLE ISSUE OF STEPPED UP SHRILLNESS IN COMMENTS BY INDIAN POLITICIANS, INCLUDING MINISTERS, ON THE US AND ASKED SPECIFICALLY WHETHER HAKSAR WOULD CONFIRM A PRESS REPORT IN ONE PAPER TODAY, ATTRIBUTED TO MINISTER OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT U. S. DIKSHIT, A STATEMENT THAT THE ASSIGNMENT OF AMBASSADOR SAXBE TO INDIA HAD DONE GREAT HARM TO INDO-US RELATIONS. (WE CAN HARDLY CREDIT THE STORY, WHICH CAME FROM KARNATAKA WHERE DIKSHIT HAS BEEN TRAVELLING, BUT IT SERVED AS A USEFUL PEG TO UNDERScore OUR INTENSE IRRITATION AT IRRESPONSIBLE PUBLIC COMMENTS BY OFFICIALS.) HAKSAR NOTED DEFENSIVELY THAT IN SEVERAL RECENT INTERVIEWS MRS. GANDHI HAD DESCRIBED INDO-US RELATIONS AS GOOD AND GIVEN FULL CREDIT TO US ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE IN THE PAST. THESE ARE THE DUTCH TV AND LEVANESE STORIES WE HAVE REPORTED SEPARATELY (NEW DELHI 5666 AND 5748) AND A WEST GERMAN INTERVIEW IS TO BE ISSUED IN THE NEXT DAY OR SO. POL COUNSELOR SAID WE HAD NOTED THESE BUT COULD NOT AVOID THE CONCLUSION THAT THWEN WEIGHTED AGAINST THE NUMEROUS HIGHLY TENDENTIOUS, CRITICAL AND INDEED POSITIVELY OFFENSIVE REMARKS ATTRIBUTED TO INDIAN OFFICIALS, THESE TIDBITS DID NOT CARRY THE WEIGHT HAKSAR WISHED TO ATTRIBUTE TO THEM. POLCOUNSELOR NOTED TENDENCIES OF JOURNALISTS OF ALL COUNTRIES TO REPORT BAD NEWS BEFORE GOOD NEWS, BUT THIS WAS ALL THE MORE REASON FOR A GOVERNMENT SUCH AS INDIA'S WHICH RELIED ON MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT ALL SENIOR SPOKESMEN DEALT WITH SENSITIVE ISSUES OF FOREIGN POLICY WITH GREAT CARE. IF INDIAN FOREIGN MINISTER HAD NOTED IN PARLIAMENT RECENTLY THE NEED FOR THE US TO PAY ATTENTION TO INDIAN SENSITIVITIES, THERE WAS AN EQUAL NEED FOR INDIANS TO DO THE SAME WITH THE US.

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